Conway selected for NIGMS PRAT fellowship

By Monica Frazier

Amanda Conway, Ph.D., an NIEHS Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) fellow, was selected for a Postdoctoral Research Associate (PRAT) *(http://www.nigms.nih.gov/Training/Pages/PRAT.aspx)* Program fellowship from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS). The program provides 3 years of funding for postdoctoral researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Conway's term, which begins Oct. 1, will allow her to continue doing research at NIEHS under the mentorship of Raja Jothi, Ph.D., head of the Systems Biology Group.

Conway, left, and Jothi examine a sample for analysis. Jothi said, "Amanda's research proposal to use interdisciplinary approaches, including pharmacological, genomic, and computational biology techniques, to study the role of CRM1 in gene regulation, nicely fits with the overall focus areas of the PRAT Program." (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)

Jothi said the PRAT Program will give Conway the experience she needs to lead her own lab one day. "The NIGMS PRAT fellowship gives Amanda the independence to study what she is truly interested in, while learning and applying computational and genomics approaches," Jothi said.

Conway, who received her Ph.D. at Duke University, said her PRAT Program research proposal is a continuation of discoveries she made during her graduate studies at Duke.

"While examining the molecular events underlying an aggressive type of leukemia, I discovered that the nuclear export receptor CRM1 binds genetic loci and recruits a leukemic fusion protein, leading to transcriptional activation of target genes," she said of her Ph.D. research. "I plan to extend this work by investigating the role for CRM1 in gene regulation during early embryonic development."

The PRAT Program is a competitive application process, which includes submitting a research plan. While the overall theme of a PRAT research project can relate to any biomedical research field, the current focus of the program is on quantitative and systems pharmacology and computational biology.

In addition to a salary, selected fellows receive a yearly travel allowance, to attend meetings and training sessions at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), as well as conferences and seminars elsewhere. The meetings at NIH include a series of seminars, which bring all PRAT fellows together for career and mentored training.

(Monica Frazier, Ph.D., is an Intramural Research Training Award fellow in the NIEHS Mechanisms of Mutation Group.)

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